



# THE 2005 MASTER PLAN ANNUAL UPDATE

*Driving Reform...Focusing Resources...Achieving Results*

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

# Acknowledgements

A great deal of time and effort was committed to the completion and review of the 2005 Master Plan Annual Updates. School systems across the State engage in yearlong improvement efforts to ensure that the programs and services provided to their students are effective and high quality. Forty-seven reviewers—who came from seven divisions within MSDE and others with educational expertise outside of MSDE—engaged in a thorough and comprehensive content review of six Master Plan Updates. Numerous other MSDE program managers examined grant-reporting, program, and budget requirements to ensure compliance with State and federal mandates. Thank you to each Division throughout the Maryland State Department of Education and every program manager who dedicated countless hours to see that this extensive and comprehensive review was of highest quality. Under the leadership of JoAnne L. Carter, Assistant State Superintendent, and with the support of Richard

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“...by thinking differently about how education can be provided, how teachers can be cultivated, how children can learn, we are creating a world-class educational model. With the courage and financial backing to advance our progress, we are building the capacity to sustain it.”

—Nancy S. Grasmick

## Driving Reform...Focusing Resources...Achieving Results

### The 2005 Master Plan Update

Three years ago, the State of Maryland made a commitment to reform the state of education and ensure adequacy and equity in its public schools. That commitment, enacted into legislation as The Bridge to Excellence Act, resulted in an enormous increase in State funding and also gave school systems flexibility to determine the best allocation of their resources. In exchange, school systems must demonstrate that they are meeting high expectations for increased student, school, and system performance. School systems were required to develop, adopt, and implement a five-year

comprehensive Master Plan linking funding from federal, State, and local sources to strategies designed to improve student and school performance. Each year, systems submit an Annual Update to the Master Plan describing progress toward goals and targets and adjustments to strategies where progress is not sufficient.

*Three Years Into Implementation, Are Master Plans Meeting Their Intended Effect of Accelerating Achievement for All Learners and Eliminating Achievement Gaps?*



Dear Friends of Maryland Public Education:

Three years ago, The Bridge to Excellence Act was created to bring equity and adequacy to school funding across the state's 24 local school systems. In exchange for a \$1.3 billion increase in funding, school systems and schools are held to high expectations—that is, to accelerate achievement for all students and eliminate achievement gaps.

Over the past year, our students, our communities, and our world have been challenged by the force of natural disasters, the casualties of war, and the hollowness of economic hardship. In response to and despite those challenges, the children in the State of Maryland have achieved great things both in the classroom and in their communities. They are models for us all.

Not only have we seen a marked increase in reading and mathematics scores by students across grade levels and student group populations, we have also watched students work tirelessly to help victims of natural disasters around the world and within our nation's borders. Already this year, in what has proven to be the largest charitable fundraising campaign in Maryland public school history, the children in our schools raised \$1.3 million dollars for the victims of Hurricane Katrina. These accomplishments and the countless others do not and cannot stand in isolation. We must continue to develop not only successful classroom learners, but critical thinkers, problem solvers, good neighbors, effective communicators, and hard workers. We are on the right track but we must not fall short.

In Maryland, we have led the charge in educational reform and embraced the potential of what it means for the children of our state. By thinking differently about how education can be provided, how teachers can be cultivated, how children can learn, we are creating a world-class educational model. With the courage and financial backing to advance our progress, we are building the capacity to sustain it.

Sincerely,

Nancy S. Grasmick  
State Superintendent of Schools

# The Master Plan

## Where high expectations, financial backing, and performance come together

Often in education, we talk in terms of targets and achievement. Like any great organization, corporation, or business will tell you, in order to realize a vision you must first embrace the potential of what is possible, assess what is working and what is not, and finally, have the courage to make a change even if it means charting a brand new course. Successful organizations are not satisfied with small successes nor do they make excuses for minor—or major—setbacks.

The State of Maryland embraced the potential of what is possible with the enactment of The Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act. This Act fuses together three very important and integrated components of school reform. First, it establishes high expectations for student performance. Second, it increases the State funding and flexibility provided to school systems responsible for meeting those high expectations. In exchange, school systems are held accountable for the performance of their schools and their students.

Unlike many corporations and businesses, our performance is not measured by the volume of products and services we sell or the speed with which we deliver. Our success is measured by the faces and minds of 865,561 boys and girls. Their potential is what is represented by the charts and graphs that convey progress. And while progress is occurring, we cannot be satisfied until every inch of white space on these charts is filled. The deadlines for meeting high expectations are closing in, and tremendous growth must occur for many subgroup populations or targets will not be met. The Five-Year Comprehensive Master Plan process ensures that school systems and the State monitor and adjust their course each year to see that potential is achieved.

### The Master Plan Guides the State and its School Systems Forward By Connecting:

- High expectations for student, school, and system performance as required by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and State targets
- An increase of \$1.3 billion dollars in State aid to public schools through 2008
- Performance accountability in exchange for increased funding and spending flexibility

The focus of the 2005 Master Plan Annual Update was to guide school systems through an analysis of data and prompt mid-course corrections to the Master Plan where deficiencies emerged.





# Completing and Reviewing Updates

The processes for both completing and reviewing the 2005 Master Plan Annual Update began with an analysis of performance data. Each process went beyond identifying whether or not Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for systems, schools, and subgroups was met; it also required the analysis of data in order to identify potential areas of concern. School systems are entering the third year of a five-

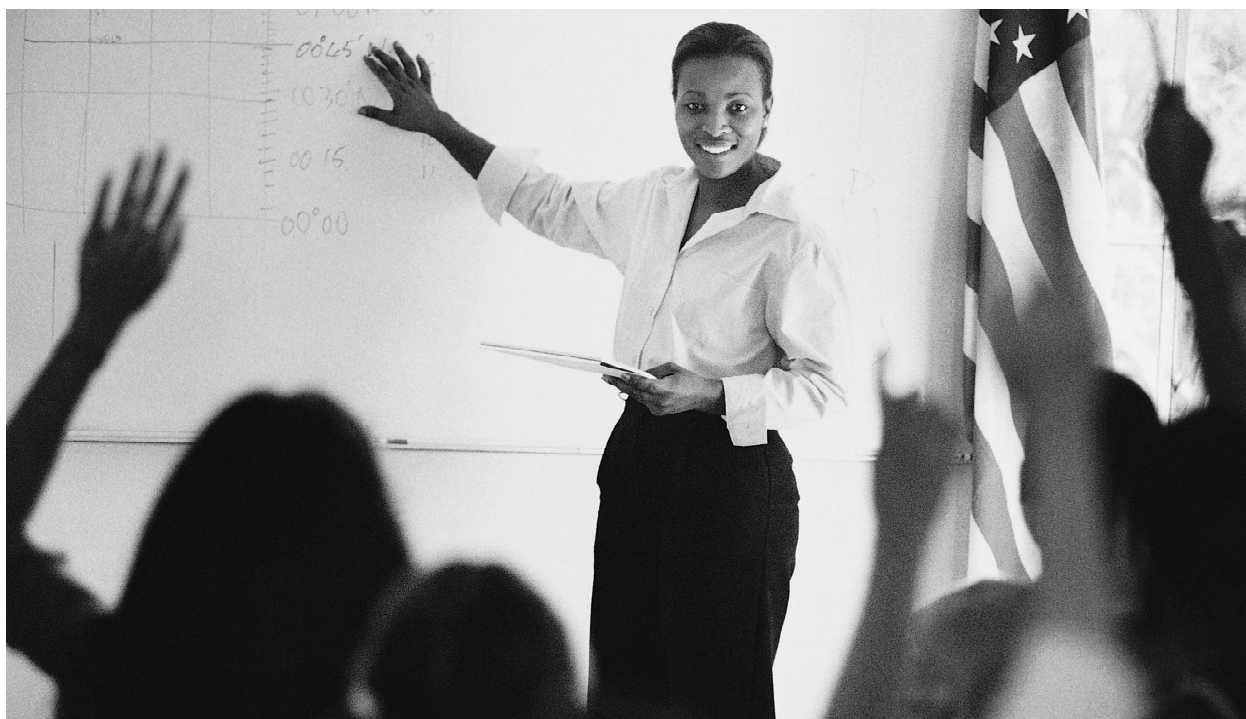
year Master Plan to improve student performance. The 2005 Annual Update guidance was designed to serve as a catalyst for change to Master Plan strategies where performance data indicated that progress was not sufficient. Engaging in mid-course correction efforts at this phase of Master Plan implementation is fundamental to student performance acceleration and achievement gap elimination.

## Completing the 2005 Master Plan Annual Update

- School systems examined performance data to determine where sufficient levels of progress were occurring and where deficiencies in performance were evident.
- Where deficiencies were evident, school systems were required to explain why and share plans for adjustments to Master Plan strategies in order to address performance concerns.
- School systems completed two budget analyses—a current year alignment and a supplemental review of prior year expenditures. When combined, these components illustrated how the budget and the Master Plan worked together.

## Reviewing the 2005 Master Plan Annual Update

- The *Content Review* determined sufficiency of the school systems' responses to the Master Plan Update requirements.
  - Four review panels comprising approximately 13 members each reviewed six Master Plan Updates.
  - School system performance data was analyzed to determine where sufficient levels of progress were occurring and where deficiencies in performance were evident.
  - Panelists then determined whether mid-course corrections were being made to address areas of concern.
  - Review panels were in regular contact with local school system points of contact to ask questions and provide school systems with opportunities to clarify responses where necessary.
- The *Technical Review*: MSDE program managers examined grant applications, budget requirements, and program descriptions for the following programs to ensure compliance with federal and State mandates: Elementary and Secondary Education Act programs, Fine Arts, Gifted and Talented, Special Education, Career and Technology Education, Early Learning, Educational Technology, and Education that is Multicultural.



## Overall Findings

The Master Plan Annual Updates were organized around the five goals established under NCLB and additional State and local goals. A summary of the overall findings are as follows:

- School systems are using data to improve achievement.
- School systems must continue intensive support for the following student subgroups:
  - African American and Hispanic students
  - Students receiving special education services
  - Students receiving limited English proficient services
  - Students receiving free and reduced price meals (criteria used to identify economically disadvantaged students)
- Eight of the 24 school systems in Maryland are systems in improvement. Two of these systems have no schools in improvement—their system improvement status results from the performance of subgroups in the aggregate only.
- One system, Baltimore City, is in Corrective Action.
- Ten of the 24 school systems in Maryland have no schools in improvement status.
- Two-hundred and thirty six schools out of 1355 are in some form of school improvement status; the majority of those schools are in Baltimore City and Prince George's County.
- Compared to elementary grades, middle school achievement is not as high, nor are gains as widespread or as large.
- Seven out of 24 school systems are likely to achieve the requirement that all teachers in core academic subjects are highly qualified by 2005-2006.
- School systems are making good progress toward implementing full-day kindergarten and required pre-kindergarten programs.

# A Closer Look at the Findings

## Performance on the NCLB Goals

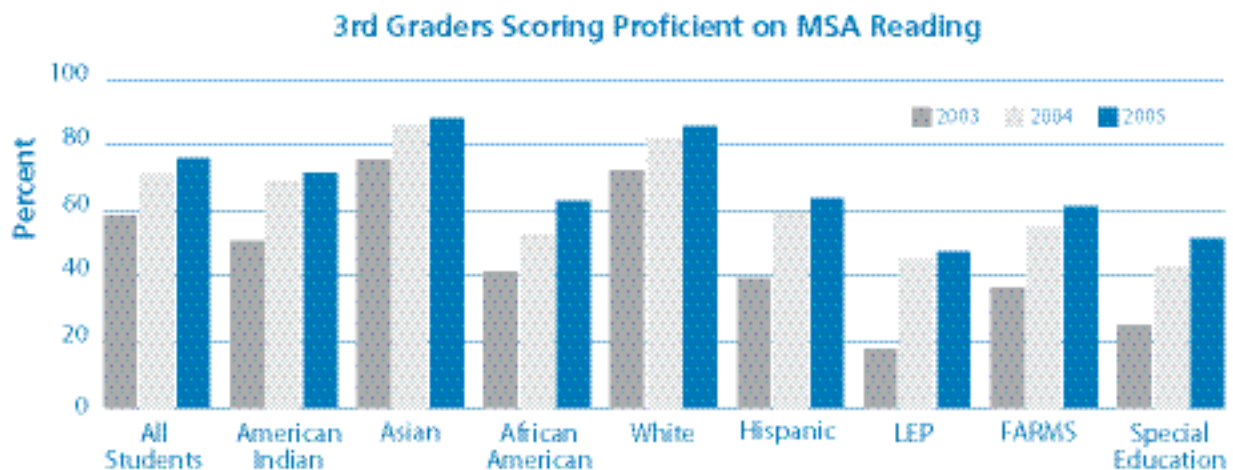
NCLB Goals	
1. By 2013-2014, all students will reach high standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts and mathematics.	3. By 2005-2006, all students will be taught by highly qualified teachers.
2. All limited English proficient students will become proficient in English and reach high academic standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts and mathematics.	4. All students will be educated in learning environments that are safe, drug free, and conducive to learning.
	5. All students will graduate from high school.

## Goals I and II: Student Performance

NCLB Goals I and II aim for all students to attain, at a minimum, proficiency in reading/language arts and mathematics. In Maryland, proficiency levels are measured by performance on the Maryland School Assessment (MSA). The graphs displaying MSA data include grades 3, 5, and 8 because these are the grades

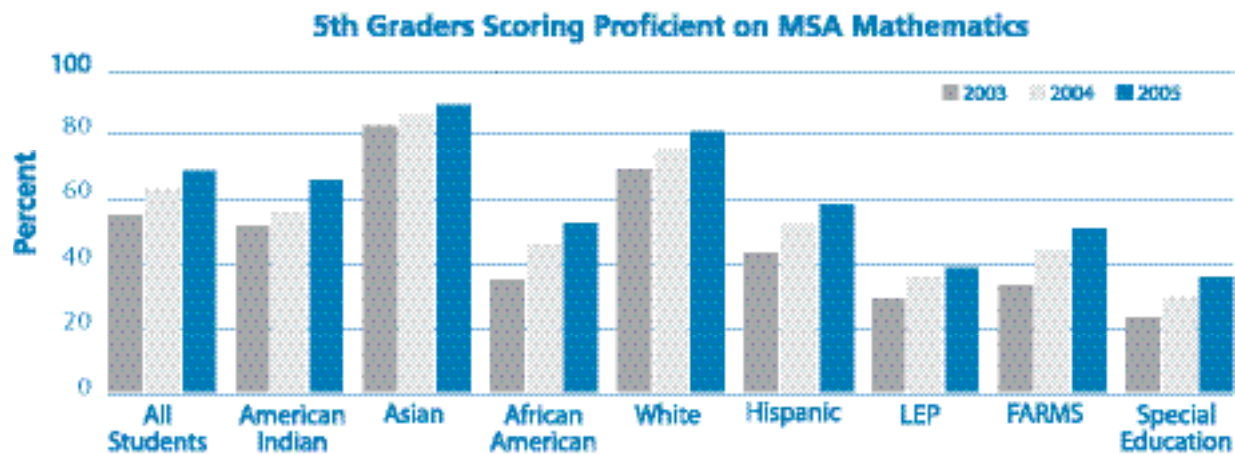
for which trend data (2003, 2004, 2005) are available (MSA administration to grades 4, 6, and 7 began in 2005). Additional data need to be collected before an accurate analysis of high school level performance can be provided.

## Elementary Level



**Third grade students receiving Limited English Proficient services made the largest gains among all students and subgroups in reading, improving 29.4 percentage points since 2003.**





**Fifth-grade African-American students made the largest gains in mathematics, increasing 17.8 percentage points since 2003.**

Statewide, every subgroup in 3rd and 5th grade shows an upward trend since 2003 in reading and mathemat-

ics except 5th grade African-American students in reading.

## Success Is Evident in Elementary Schools That Offer:

**Individualized student support plans.** These plans, unique to the student, identify learning strategies and proven interventions designed to support students who are not performing on grade level or who are experiencing difficulty in particular content areas or skill development.

**Targeted academic intervention programs.** Customized based on the level of need, interventions provide additional support to struggling students. Interventions can be part of regular classroom instruction, they can extend beyond the regular school day, week, or year, or they can be provided in small group or one-on-one settings, such as tutoring.

**Targeted professional development.** Data inform school systems and schools about strengths and weaknesses in student performance which can also alert systems to where additional support for adults—teachers, administrators, central office staff, and support staff—is needed. Targeted professional development is driven by data, includes specific and measurable objectives linked to student performance, and is on-going.

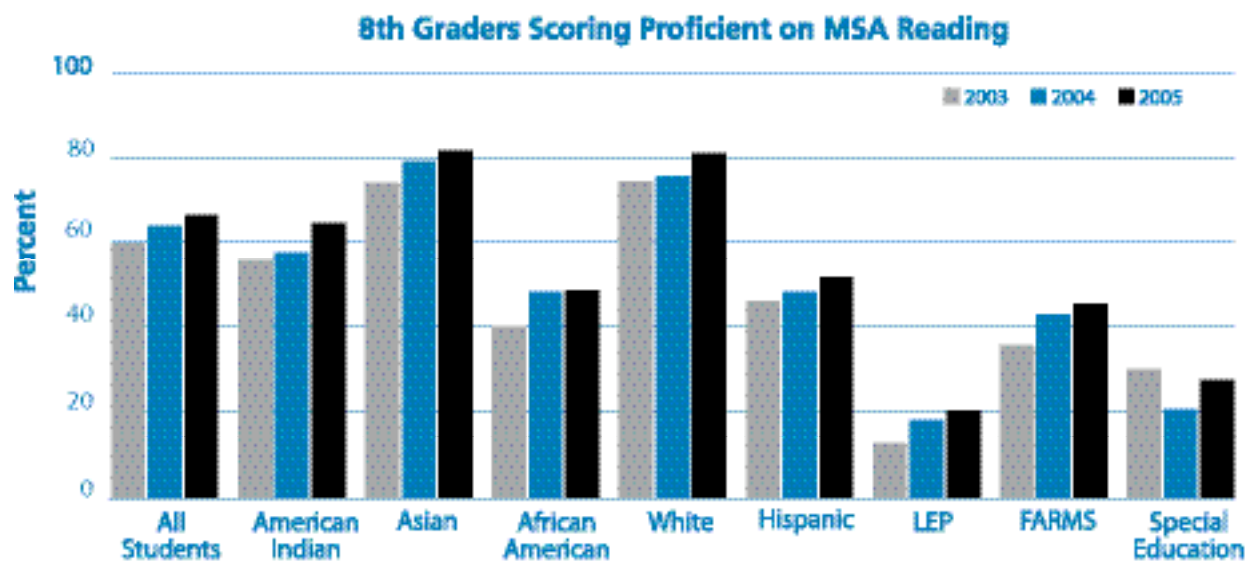
**Opportunities for collaboration with other subject and grade level teachers.** Teachers who are able to plan and share strategies across grades and content areas are better able to build on the skills and knowledge their students bring to school and that are being developed in other courses. This approach facilitates the replication of success from grade level to grade level in different contents and contexts.

**Progress is most evident in school systems and schools that use local and State performance data at all levels to drive operational, programmatic, and instructional changes...and have aligned local curriculum and assessments with the Voluntary State Curriculum.**



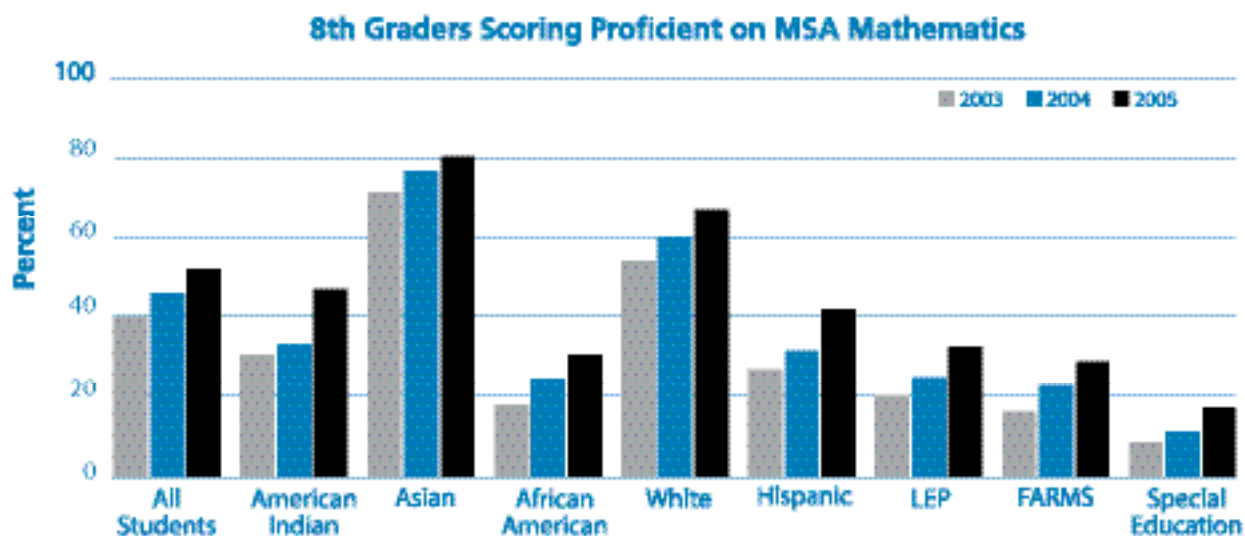
## Levels of Achievement for 8th Graders Are Not as High as Those of 3rd and 5th Graders

### Middle Level



While most subgroups are improving steadily in reading, the performance of students receiving special education services has remained flat or declined since 2003.





**In mathematics, all subgroups of eighth graders have made consistent improvement since 2003.**

## Middle Schools Are Focusing On:

### Extended day, week, and year programming.

Increasing the instructional opportunities for students is a key focus of middle schools making mid-course corrections.

**Mathematics-focused professional development.** Opportunities for teachers across grade levels to develop and expand learning strategies in mathematics is a priority for many school systems.

**Instructional Program Reviews.** Many school systems are conducting an intensive review of program offerings to assess alignment of curriculum and rigor of coursework.

**Alignment between system Master Plan, School Improvement Plans and Staff Professional Goals.** Focusing on this alignment supports the awareness of school, staff, and student needs and the development of action steps to meet those needs. Many systems acknowledged this work as important to see that comprehensive improvement occurs at a steady pace.

While progress has occurred over the past three years in each of the 24 school systems, tremendous growth is still required over the next two years and beyond in order to meet federal and State targets, particularly for African-American and Hispanic students, students receiving special education services, students receiving limited English proficient services, and students receiving free and reduced price meals.

## Goal III: Highly Qualified Teachers

The No Child Left Behind Act requires that all teachers in core academic subject areas achieve highly qualified status in the subject in which they are teaching by **2005-2006**. In their Annual Update, school systems were asked to provide information on the status of highly qualified teachers in their systems.

According to a review conducted by MSDE's Division of Certification and Accreditation, **seven out of 24 school systems (Allegany, Caroline, Cecil, Frederick, Garrett, St. Mary's, and Talbot) appear likely to achieve the requirement that all teachers in core academic subjects are highly qualified by 2005-2006**. While most systems have many strategies in place to attract and retain highly qualified teachers,

or support teachers in becoming highly qualified, it is unlikely that most systems will achieve this target by the conclusion of this school year.

### **Factors identified by those systems not likely to meet the target include:**

**Difficulty in attracting highly qualified teachers in critical shortage areas such as science and special education.**

**Competition with neighboring counties and states for qualified candidates.**

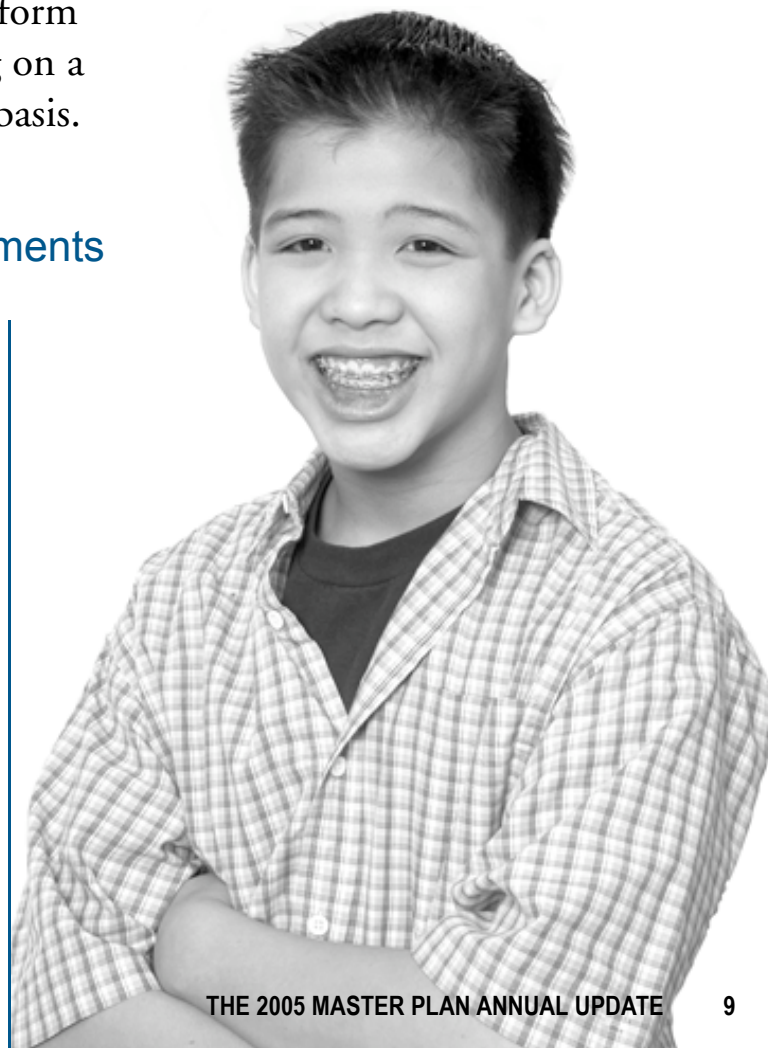
Success is evident in school systems where the Master Plan is a living document in day-to-day planning and is used to guide and inform budget development and goal setting on a weekly, monthly, yearly and beyond basis.

## Goal IV: Safe Learning Environments

School systems are required to report on the number of persistently dangerous schools in their system. Baltimore City was the only system that reported having persistently dangerous schools.

Many school systems have established local goals focused on safe and nurturing environments. Examples of strategies being implemented to support this goal include:

- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS),
- Character Education Programs,
- Opportunities for parents, staff, and students to share perceptions about climate as it relates to effective teaching and learning, and
- Student and teacher mentor programs.



## Goal V: All Students Will Graduate From High School

In order to measure progress toward this goal, school systems are required to include information on both graduation and dropout rates in their Annual Updates. An analysis of dropout rate data is provided first, followed by an analysis of graduation rate data.

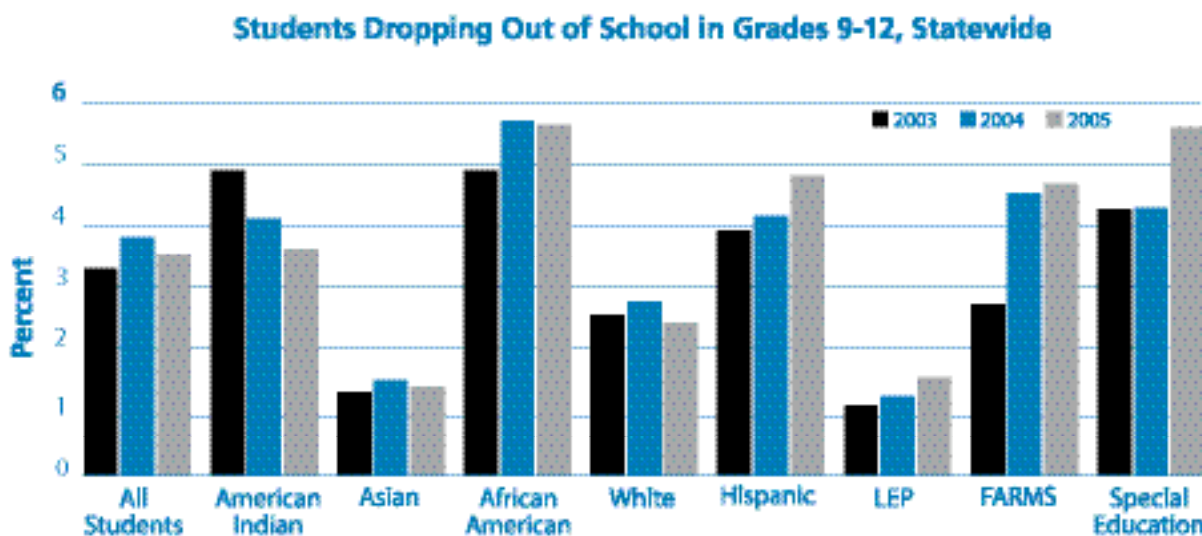
- All students (3.69%), as well as the subgroups of American Indian/Alaskan Native (3.63%) and African American (5.58%) students, experienced a slight decrease in the percentage of students dropping out of school since 2004, but still did not meet the standard.

- The dropout rates among remaining subgroups increased in 2005:

- Hispanic students: 4.75 percent,
- Students receiving special education services: 5.50 percent,
- Students receiving free and reduced price meals: 4.63 percent.

Statewide, only three subgroups met the 3% or lower standard for dropout rates.

### Statewide Dropout Rate Analysis



### Additional Reporting Requirement

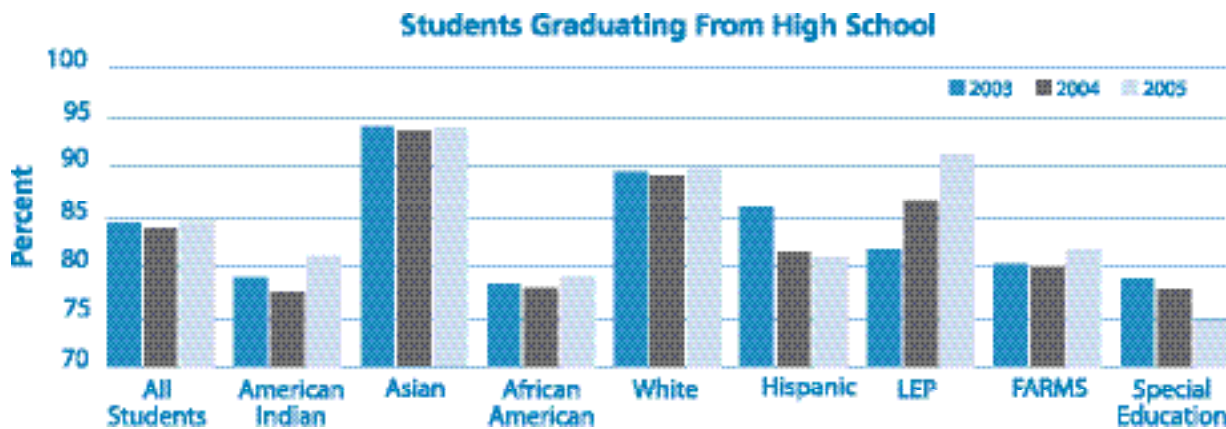
#### Full-Day Kindergarten and Pre-Kindergarten for Eligible Four-Year-Olds: Facilities Report

In order to track the implementation of mandated pre-kindergarten for children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and full-day kindergarten programs and ensure compliance with Bridge to Excellence legislation, school systems are required to report on the status of capital improvements needed to meet the requirement. A summary of the findings follows.

Overall, school systems are making good progress at implementing full-day kindergarten (FDK) and required pre-kindergarten (PK) programs. Nearly all have clearly staged plans to offer programs at all schools or to all eligible children. Transportation for pre-kindergarten students is not required in the law, but most school systems are providing some service.

- Twelve school systems have met the mandate and have FDK for all students and PK programs for all eligible students in place for school year 2005-2006.
- Seven additional systems (19 total) are providing PK programs to all eligible students either at their home school or at a regional center.

## Statewide Graduation Rate Analysis



Overall, graduation rates increased statewide for all subgroups except Hispanic students and students receiving special education.

- In addition to All Students (84.83%), three subgroups, Asian/Pacific Islander (94.58%), White (88.58%), and Limited English Proficient (91.74%) students, met the 2005 Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) of 83.24 percent.
- Rates for Hispanic students decreased slightly from 82.55 percent in 2004 to 82.34 percent in 2005.
- Graduation rates for students receiving special education services declined from 77.56 percent in 2004 to 74.80 percent in 2005.

The analysis of Master Plan Updates revealed that the majority of school systems are addressing graduation and dropout concerns through instruction and a focus on achievement. For example:

- Most systems are continuing with or extending learning opportunities that occur outside of the regular school day.
- Expansion of Career and Technology Education (CTE) programs is also occurring as a way to connect learning with real life experience, which can help students to recognize how important education is to their future.
- A number of systems also shared their efforts to develop academic or behavioral intervention plans as soon as students begin exhibiting behaviors associated with dropping out.

- Nine systems have requested and received State construction funds from the Public School Construction Program specifically for kindergarten classroom additions or relocatable classrooms.
- All new elementary schools are being designed to include PK and FDK programs.
- Of the 12 systems that do not have FDK in place, 10 have systematic plans to add the remaining schools in the next two school years. They will be using available space within the existing schools or relocatable classrooms to expand the capacity of some schools.

- Two of the 12 systems that do not have FDK in place have submitted information that indicates further planning is required in order for the mandate to be met. In facilities terms, one is dealing with overcrowding forecasts and is working to develop a realistic plan to increase capacity. The other has a large number of schools without FDK programs and has requested whole school renovation or replacement projects from the State that would not be completed for many years.
- Six school systems are providing PK transportation to children attending their home school as opposed to regional sites.



# Statewide Budget Analysis

## Allocation of Additional Resources by Federal Goals, Local Goals, and Mandatory Cost of Doing Business

For fiscal year 2006, local school systems in Maryland will see an overall growth in education aid of 8.2 percent. In the 2005 Master Plan Annual Update, school systems were asked to report increases in revenue over the prior year and their expenditures—how they plan to allocate their additional revenue—based on their local goals and mandatory cost of doing business. To provide a statewide analysis, expenditure data were aggregated to the NCLB goal level using assumptions based on the correlation between local school system Master Plan goals and the five NCLB goals. Any local school system goal not attributable to a particular NCLB goal has been attributed to Local Goals and Indicators. The expenditure analysis is developed by aggregating expenditures to the State level.

NCLB Goal	Increase in Expenditures
<b>Goal 1:</b> By 2013-2014, all students will reach high standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts and mathematics.	\$113 million
<b>Goal 2:</b> All limited English proficient students will become proficient in English and reach high academic standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts and mathematics.	\$644,000
<b>Goal 3:</b> By 2005-2006, all students will be taught by highly qualified teachers.	\$72 million
<b>Goal 4:</b> All students will be educated in learning environments that are safe, drug free, and conducive to learning.	\$10 million
<b>Goal 5:</b> All students will graduate from high school.	\$5.5 million
Local goals and indicators	\$18 million
Mandatory cost of doing business	\$270 million

*Expenditure data for Baltimore City Public School System and Prince George's County Public Schools have been omitted from this analysis based on the approvable status of their 2005 Master Plan Update.*

## Allocation of Additional Resources by Strategy

This expenditure analysis illustrates the allocation of additional resources by the following strategies: Instruction, Highly Qualified Teachers, and Mandatory Cost of Doing Business.

### Instruction

\$30 million in increased revenue has been dedicated to instructional related items:

- 15 school systems have allocated \$6 million in increased revenue to improve reading/language arts and mathematics instruction.
- In fiscal year 2006, 15 school systems will spend \$16 million in increased revenue to continue implementing pre-kindergarten for economically disadvantaged students and full-day kindergarten programs.
- Eight school systems have allocated just under \$1 million in increased revenue to increase English language learner programs.
- Seven school systems have allocated over \$1.2 million in increased revenue to support curriculum alignment efforts and effective use of data to drive instructional and programmatic improvements.

### Highly Qualified Teachers

- School systems allocated \$9.7 million of increased revenue to support the recruitment and attainment of highly qualified teachers.
- \$1.2 million was allocated to provide high quality professional development.

### Mandatory Cost of Doing Business

- In fiscal year 2006, school systems allocated \$270 million of increased revenue to salaries and benefits, transportation costs, and increases in utility expenses—all items necessary to operate their schools.





## In Summary

As a result of in-depth analysis that occurred around areas of concern and the review of school system plans to address those concerns, the Maryland State Board of Education approved 22 of the 24 2005 Master Plan Annual Updates at its December Board Meeting.

- Prince George's County's 2005 Master Plan Annual Update required further enhancement and was approved by the State Board of Education at its January 2006 Board Meeting.
- Baltimore City Public School System is resubmitting its 2005 Master Plan Annual Update and the State Board of Education is scheduled to take action in March 2006.

**In the three years since school systems submitted their original five-year Master Plans**, the focus on individual students is evident, and the plans, in most cases, are yielding success. We have seen and heard the exciting ways these plans have come alive, from the central office level to the students and families they serve. These plans are driving budget and policy decisions and systems are making changes where data indicate change must occur. The State of Maryland is on the right course, but tremendous growth is still required in order to meet our obligation to every single child.

Success is evident in school systems that use technology purposefully **in teaching, learning, and parental involvement efforts.**



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